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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON  
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN TURKMENISTAN

1. Post is authorized to make the following statement at  
the December 18, 2008, meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council:

Begin Text:

Mr. Chairman,

The United States welcomes the Government of Turkmenistan's decision to hold parliamentary elections on December 14. For the first time, the Government of Turkmenistan publicly invited international observers to monitor the election process. The ODIHR sent an election support team to assist the OSCE Center in Ashgabat.

These elections demonstrated some positive steps forward, such as the elimination of negative voting and allowing citizen groups to nominate candidates. On the whole, however, they did not meet all of Turkmenistan's OSCE commitments. We urge Turkmenistan to enact further reforms that will enable it to hold free, fair, transparent, and competitive elections that meet its OSCE commitments.

Mr. Chairman, the United States anticipates the continued engagement of Turkmen authorities with the ODIHR election experts, and stands ready, as always, to support the government in such efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
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